

TO: Larry Henderson, Washington Office

DATE: 10-10-69

FOR: The Editor
The Washington Post
Washington, D. C.

NO: TC-0003

Attention: Mr. Philip Geylin

Dear Sirs:

In these columns, some of our Rand colleagues are advocating an unconditional total withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Vietnam within one year. We wish to make clear that there are others at Rand with equivalent professional experience in Vietnam and Southeast Asia who, as individuals, hold different views as to the preferred U.S. policy.

On Vietnam, as well as other subjects, Government sponsors of Rand research have sought diversity of views and analysis from among Rand staff members. The signers of both of these letters have had opportunities for presenting their views in a variety of forms -- publicly and in proprietary research.

Our disagreement with the views of our colleagues is fundamental. They underrate the continued relevance and importance of the basic principles that underlie the war in Vietnam. Resisting aggression and the use of force to change political boundaries appears to us no less worthy a principle because it has been difficult to apply in Vietnam. Certainly we have made mistakes, major ones, in Vietnam but we strongly support the guiding purposes behind American policy there.

The past costs we have incurred in lives, dollars and domestic tranquility testify to the seriousness of our purpose and the magnitude of our resolve. It is now perfectly proper for us as a nation to limit the costs we are prepared to bear in the further defense of South Vietnam. We believe that there should be a major reduction in our military forces and activities in Vietnam, and this reduced level of effort should not be conditional. But we do not agree that the South Vietnamese are so little capable of ever defending themselves that it is unwarranted to incur some additional costs to permit them the opportunity to do so. And the truth of the matter is that, in part,

TO: Larry Henderson, Washington Office--p. 2

TC-0003
10-10-69

the improvements still needed in their defense capabilities reflect past U.S. decisions and activities, including over-Americanization of the war.

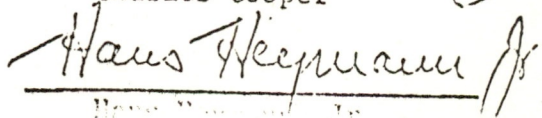
An unconditional reduction in our forces need not, and should not, be carried out as a policy of despair. There are signs of continuing improvement in the effectiveness of the GVN and South Vietnam's armed forces. A responsible reduction in U.S. military support can help to assure the fullest possible contribution to their own defense by the South Vietnamese themselves. Such a reduction can take place with reasonable, not certain, prospects of success.

We share our colleagues judgment that the North Vietnamese have demonstrated remarkable "resiliency, determination and effectiveness" and that they can be expected to continue to do so in the future. The same can be said of the South Vietnamese. It would be as great an error to base U.S. policy on an overly pessimistic view of the latter as on an overly optimistic view of the former, particularly today when many of the past impediments to South Vietnamese performance have been removed. The GVN's "capacity to survive on its own" is, indeed, the test -- and one which we believe they can pass with limited, temporary and declining assistance from us. And this is precisely the kind of assistance we should now give -- in order to assure the fullest contribution from the South Vietnamese, and in order to limit the costs we must bear. But simply pulling out precipitously leaving behind important military lacunae and the expectation of only half-hearted political support in the future would place crushing, not stimulating, pressure on the GVN.

Professional experience, no matter how great, still leaves unresolved uncertainties. The above views reflect both. So do those of our colleagues in their letter.

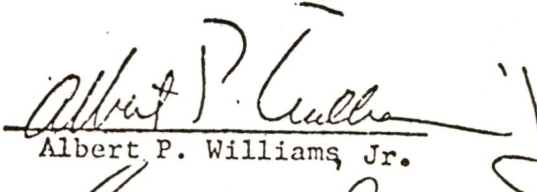
Sincerely,

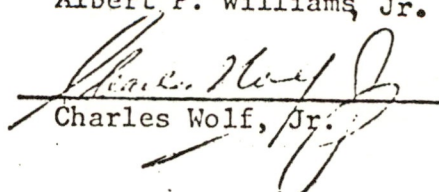

Charles Cooper


Hans Heppmann Jr.

TO: Larry Henderson, Washington Office--p. 3

TC-0003
10-10-69


Albert P. Williams, Jr.


Charles Wolf, Jr.

TO: Larry Henderson, Washington Office

DATE: 10-10-69

FOR: The Editor
The Washington Post
Washington, D. C.

NO: TC-0003

Attention: Mr. Philip Geylin

Dear Sirs:

In these columns, some of our Rand colleagues are advocating an unconditional total withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Vietnam within one year. We wish to make clear that there are others at Rand with equivalent professional experience in Vietnam and Southeast Asia who, as individuals, hold different views as to the preferred U.S. policy.

On Vietnam, as well as other subjects, Government sponsors of Rand research have sought diversity of views and analysis from among Rand staff members. The signers of both of these letters have had opportunities for presenting their views in a variety of forms -- publicly and in proprietary research.

Our disagreement with the views of our colleagues is fundamental. They underrate the continued relevance and importance of the basic principles that underlie the war in Vietnam. Resisting aggression and the use of force to change political boundaries appears to us no less worthy a principle because it has been difficult to apply in Vietnam. Certainly we have made mistakes, major ones, in Vietnam but we strongly support the guiding purposes behind American policy there.

and/or to... { The past costs we have incurred in lives, dollars and domestic tranquility testify to the seriousness of our purpose and the magnitude of our resolve. It is now perfectly proper for us as a nation to limit the costs we are prepared to bear in the further defense of South Vietnam. We believe that there should be a major reduction in our military forces and activities in Vietnam, and this reduced level of effort should not be conditional. But we do not agree that the South Vietnamese are so little capable of ever defending themselves that it is unwarranted to incur ^{how much} some additional costs to permit them the opportunity to do so. And the truth of the matter is that, in part, *to...?*

TO: Larry Henderson, Washington Office--p. 2

TC-0003
10-10-69

the improvements still needed in their defense capabilities reflect past U.S. decisions and activities, including over-Americanization of the war. *True; what basis for confidence that...?*

An unconditional reduction in our forces need not, and should not, be carried out as a policy of despair. There are signs of continuing improvement in the effectiveness of the GVN and South Vietnam's armed forces. A responsible reduction in U.S. military support can help to assure the fullest possible contribution to their own defense by the South Vietnamese themselves. Such a reduction can take place with reasonable, not certain, prospects of success. *If it fails...? Does it mean then get out? Can he?*

We share our colleagues judgment that the ~~North~~ North Vietnamese have demonstrated remarkable "resiliency, determination and effectiveness" and that they can be expected to continue to do so in the future. The same can be said of the South Vietnamese. It would be as great an error to base U.S. policy on an overly pessimistic view of the latter as on an overly optimistic view of the former, particularly today when many of the past impediments to South Vietnamese performance have been removed. The GVN's "capacity to survive on its own" is, indeed, the test -- and one which we believe they can pass with limited, temporary and declining assistance from us. And this is precisely the kind of assistance we should now give -- in order to assure the fullest contribution from the South Vietnamese, and in order to limit the costs we must bear. But simply pulling out precipitously leaving behind important military lacunae and the expectation of only half-hearted political support in the future would place crushing, not stimulating, pressure on the GVN.

Professional experience, no matter how great, still leaves unresolved uncertainties. The above views reflect both. So do those of our colleagues in their letter.

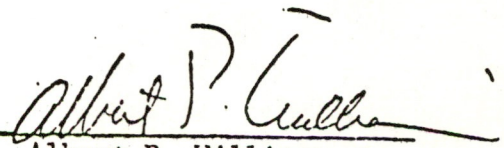
Sincerely,

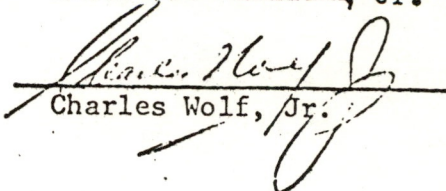
Charles Cooper
Charles Cooper

Hans Heppmann Jr.
Hans Heppmann Jr.

TO: Larry Henderson, Washington Office--p. 3

TC-0003
10-10-69


Albert P. Williams, Jr.


Charles Wolf, Jr.